

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----023081 171723Z /43

O 171709Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0440

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 18907

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MILITARY PLANS FOR EXPANSION AND
AFRICANIZATION OF SECURITY FORCES

SUMMARY: THE RHODESIA SECURITY FORCES ARE PLANNING A
SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION AND AFRICANIZATION OF THE ARMY,
AT LEAST DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF RAR BATTALIONS AND
INTRODUCING AFRICAN UNITS INTO THE TERRITORIALS. THIS
REORGANIZATION WILL HAVE IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES FOR
EFFORTS TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ALONG THE
LINES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY OFFICER SAW COL. JEREMY REILLY OF LORD
CARVER'S STAFF ON NOV. 16. REILLY, ALONG WITH MAJOR
ROGER WHEELER, REMAINED IN RHODESIA FOR THREE DAYS
FOLLOWING LORD CARVER'S DEPARTURE FROM SALISBURY
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LAST WEEK. THEY RECEIVED A SERIES OF MILITARY
BRIEFINGS AND VISITED SEVERAL ARMY INSTALLATIONS
AROUND THE COUNTRY BUT DID NOT TOUR OPERATIONAL AREAS
OR SEE OPERATIONAL UNITS.

2. REILLY RETURNED TO LONDON PERSUADED THAT THE RHO-
DESIA SECURITY FORCES HAVE THE GUERRILLA WAR WELL IN

HAND. HE SAID THE MOST VULNERABLE ELEMENT IN RHODESIA'S PRESENT MILITARY STRUCTURE IS THE LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF WHITE MANPOWER WHICH HAS RESTRICTED THE SIZE OF THE ARMY AND, THROUGH CALL-UPS, DRAINED THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF ITS NECESSARY WORK FORCE. RHODESIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES, HOWEVER, HAVE NOW INITIATED A REORGANIZATION PLAN INTENDED BOTH TO EXPAND THE ARMY AND RELIEVE THE DEMANDS ON THE WHITE COMMUNITY.

3. THE PLAN CALLS FOR EXTENSIVE AFRICANIZATION OF THE MILITARY FORCES AND HAS TWO PARALLEL OBJECTIVES: A) TO INCREASE THE REGULAR RHODESIAN AFRICA RIFLES UNITS FROM TWO BATTALIONS TO FOUR AND POSSIBLY FIVE; AND B) TO INSERT THREE REGULAR COMPANIES (ABOUT 360 MEN) OFFICERED BY WHITE NATIONAL SERVICEMEN INTO EACH OF THE EIGHT BATTALIONS OF THE RHODESIA REGIMENT (TERRITORIALS). INTENSIVE TRAINING OF NEW RECRUITS IS ALREADY UNDERWAY AT BALLA BALLA SOUTH OF BULAWEYO WITH AN AIM OF TURNING OUT 400 NEW SOLDIERS PER MONTH. THE NEW STRUCTURE, WHICH NEARLY DOUBLES RHODESIA'S AVAILABLE FORCES, WOULD BE IN PLACE BY THE END OF 1978.

4. WHILE EXPANDING THE RAR IS IMPORTANT IN ITSELF, THE REAL CHANGE IS IN THE RHODESIA REGIMENT (TERRITORIALS). THIS UNIT IS NOW ALMOST ENTIRELY WHITE AND COMPOSED OF RESERVES CALLED UP FOR PERIODS OF 190 DAYS.
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AT ANY ONE TIME, THERE ARE IN EACH BATTALION THREE COMPANIES ON DUTY FOR HALF A YEAR AND THREE WHICH HAVE

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 18907

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RETURNED TO CIVILIAN LIFE FOR SIX MONTHS. THE NEW STRUCTURE ESSENTIALLY REGULARIZES THESE TERRITORIALS. THREE COMPANIES OF AFRICAN SOLDIERS (WITH A THREE-YEAR ENLISTMENT) AND MOSTLY WHITE NCO'S AND JUNIOR OFFICERS (IN TWO-YEAR NATIONAL SERVICE) WILL FORM THE CORE OF EACH TERRITORIAL BATTALION. EXCEPT FOR SOME SENIOR OFFICERS, THIS ARRANGEMENT RELIEVES MOST WHITE RESERVES OF PERIODIC DUTY, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR SPECIAL CALL-UP. THE TERRITORIALS WILL BENEFIT FROM GREATER OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY BUT AT THE COST OF HIGHER AFRICAN CASUALTIES.

5. COMMENT: THE RESTRUCTURING AND EXPANSION OF THE RHODESIA DEFENSE FORCES HAS SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFORTS TO REACH A SETTLEMENT: A) EASING THE STRAIN ON WHITE MANPOWER WILL GIVE A MAJOR BOOST TO THE DISRUPTED RHODESIAN ECONOMY AND TO WHITE MORALE; B) THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RDF ALREADY BELIEVES IT IS CONTAINING THE GUERRILLA THREAT, AND DOUBLING THE SIZE OF THE ARMY CAN ONLY ENHANCE MILITARY CONFIDENCE AND RELIEVE THE PRESSURE WHICH THE GUERRILLAS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO APPLY; C) INCREASING RECRUITMENT OF AFRICANS BY BOTH THE GUERRILLAS AND THE SECURITY FORCES WILL EXPAND THE VIOLENCE IN RHODESIAN SOCIETY, AND TURN THE CURRENT CONFLICT MORE INTO A BLACK AGAINST BLACK CONFRONTATION IN THE NATURE OF CIVIL WAR; D) WITH BOTH SIDES RAPIDLY EXPANDING THEIR FORCES, THE PROBLEMS OF DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION AFTER A SETTLEMENT BECOME ALL THE MORE UNMANAGEABLE; E) THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE RAR AND THE AFRICANIZATION OF THE TERRITORIALS WILL MAKE "ACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS" OF THE RDF MORE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE AND IDENTIFY, AND THE RDF WOULD LIKELY BE MORE RESISTANT TO EVENTUAL AMALGAMATION WITH PATRIOTIC FRONT UNITS.

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Message Attributes

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Secure: OPEN
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TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH
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